

Message Text

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S E C R E T HAVANA 2561

NODIS
CHEROKEE FOR UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM AND PETER TARNOFF FROM LANE

EO 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: SHUM CU
SUBJ: RELEASE OF CUBAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

1. NOW THAT REVIEW OF CUBAN LISTS IS UNDERWAY IN WASHINGTON, I WONDER WHETHER WE HAVE CONSIDERED TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUGGEST ADDITIONAL NAMES OURSELVES. WHILE GOC MAY IN PART BE MAKING A GOODWILL GESTURE TOWARD U.S. IN COMING FORWARD WITH THIS PROPOSAL, I BELIEVE IT PRIMARILY SERVES BROADER OBJECTIVES OF THEIR OWN. IT APPEARS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT GOC HAS MADE FRESH DECISION TO RID ITSELF OF IDOLOGICAL RECALCITRANTS AND THAT NOT ONLY THE U.S. WILL BE RECIPIENT (DEPARTURES FOR VENEZUELA MAY HAVE REACHED LOW HUNDREDS); WE KNOW THAT GOC IS EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING THE HOUSING AND OTHER POSSESSIONS WHICH EMIGRANTS LEAVE BEHIND; AND, OR COURSE, THE CUBANS ANTICIPATE DIVIDEND IN WORLD PUBLIC OPINION AS SUGGESTED FOR FOREIGN MINISTER CONSALVI (CARACAS 7766).

2. THE CUBANS THEREFORE HAVE VESTED INTERESTS OF THEIR OWN IN THIS OPERATION, AND IT MAY BE TIMELY AND PRODUCTIVE FOR US TO BROACH PROPOSALS WHICH INTEREST US SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING:

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A. THE FOUR REMAINING U.S. POLITICAL PRISONERS: LUNT, JACKSON, MORALES AND TUR. IT SEEMS INCONGRUOUS TO TAKE LARGE NUMBERS OF CUBAN PRISONERS ANDNOT TRY TO GET OUR OWN.THERE IS A FIFTH PRISONER I BELIEVE SHOULD BE ADDED TO THIS LIST WHO HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A POLITICAL PRISONER. HIS NAME IS CARLOS ARMAS ESTEVEZ

(SEE HAVANA 2514).

B. MARIA MARGARITA RODRIGUEZ GONZALEZ (DE CID), AT THAT TIME LOCAL EMPLOYEE OF THE SWISS EMBASSY'S FOREIGN INTERESTS SECTION, WHO WAS SENTENCED IN 1976 TO TWENTY YEARS FOR "CRIMES AGAINST THE INTEGRITY AND STABILITY OF THE NATION". BASICALLY SHE WAS ACCUSED OF SPYING FOR THE CIA WHILE CARRYING OUT HER DUTIES IN PROTECTION OF U.S. CITIZENS' INTERESTS. HER HUSBAND NOW WORKS FOR USINT. THE SWISS TRIED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO FREE HER, AND I BELIEVE WE HAVE A MORAL OBLIGATION TO CONTINUE THE EFFORT. (IT WOULD PRESUMABLY BE WISE TO CHECK THIS NAME WITH CIA, ALTHOUGH I HAVE NO REASON TO GIVE CREDIT TO CUBAN ALLEGATIONS.) I CANNOT BE 100 PERCENT SURE THAT MRS. CID WANTS TO LEAVE CUBA, BUT I STRONGLY SUSPECT THAT SHE AND HER HUSBAND WOULD--LIKE THE OTHERS--WELCOME EXILE IF THAT IS THE PRICE OF HER FREEDOM.

3. LAST DECEMBER A LARGE GROUP OF U.S. SENATORS CALLED FOR THE RELEASE OF THREE OTHER CUBAN POLITICAL PRISONERS (HUBER MATOS, ANGEL CUADRA, AND ARMANDO VALLADARES). MATOS CASE IS PARTICULARLY NOTORIOUS AND HENCE SENSITIVE HERE. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT FIDEL CASTRO REACTED HARSHLY TO THIS APPEAL (78 HAVANA 0336). I WOULD RECOMMEND AGAINST PRESSING FOR RELEASE OF THESE PRISONERS AT THIS TIME SINCE IT COULD JEOPARDIZE THE WHOLE PROGRAM.

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